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ABSTRACT

The relationship to later parole outcome of therapeutic changes made by juvenile delinquents during residential treatment was explored. Subjects (N=823) were all those admitted to two California Youth Authority institutions for boys between August 1969 and March 1971. Change was measured by pretests and posttests with the 14 scales of the Jesness Behavior Checklist: recidivism was determined by a six-month follow-up of subjects. Results showed that recidivism status interacted with personality characteristics to produce an effect on change scores for several of the checklist scales. The Neurotic Acting-out and Immature Conformist nonrecidivists improved on several scales, while the Neurotic Anxious delinquents who did well on parole showed less improvement while institutionalized than those who later recidivated. Such data emphasize the importance of considering the differential responsiveness of various personality groups to treatment, and tend to support the development and refinement of differential treatment programs. (Author)

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Relationship of Therapeutic Change to Recidivism of Juvenile Delinquents

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Relationship of Therapeutic Change to

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This study explored the relationship of therapeutic changes made by juvenile delinquents during residential treatment to their later parole outcome. The variables examined were derived from the short-term therapy goals of the treatment programs in which the subjects were placed. These goals were assumed by the programs' staff to be related to the incidence of later criminal behavior, and are typical of the short-term goals of many delinquency rehabilitation programs (Cohen & Filipczak, 1971; Jesness, 1975). Although such factors (e.g. anger control, friendliness, responsibility) are often the focus for change and serve as therapeutic goals in rehabilitation programs, there is little evidence that such change is related to later criminal behavior. The major hypothesis that guided this study was that the short-term goals would indeed be related to reduced recidivism, although personality variables would interact with change while in treatment to influence parole outcome.

Method: In this investigation, change was measured by pretests and posttests with the fourteen scales of the Jesness Behavior Checklist (Jesness, 1971a). Outcome was determined by noting recidivism of subjects at a six-month follow-up. Data were gathered at two California Youth Authority institutions for boys. Subjects included all those admitted between August, 1969 through March, 1971. The resulting sample consisted of 823 males with a median age of 16.6 years. All subjects were classified into personality categories by use of the Sequential I-level Classification system devised by Jesness in 1975. This classification system is a semi-objective approach to classification utilizing data from three independent sources: Jesness

Inventory, a sentence completion test, and a brief interview. The personality types compared in this study were derived from the theoretical formulations of Sullivan, Grant, and Grant (1957) who view delinquency as resulting from the interaction of environmental stress, social roles, and intrapsychic conflicts. The classification scheme is based on a cognitive-developmental approach to personality which conceptualizes stages of interpersonal development called Interpersonal Maturity Levels (I-level). These stages represent levels of increasingly mature interpersonal perceptions.

Results: Analyses of variance on change scores showed no significant main effects for either personality type or recidivism. However, there were several statistically significant recidivism by personality interactions. As can be seen in Table 1, significant interactions were found on the following scales: Unobstrusiveness, $F(7,768) = 2.04$, $p < 0.05$; Friendliness, $F(7,768) = 2.09$, $p < 0.05$; Responsibility, $F(7,768) = 2.11$, $p < 0.05$; Social Control, $F(7,768) = 2.90$, $p < 0.01$; Anger Control, $F(7,768) = 2.49$, $p < 0.05$; and the total change measure, $F(7,768) = 2.30$, $p < 0.01$. As can be seen in the figure, the major hypothesis was supported for two of the personality types (Immature Conformist and Neurotic Acting-out delinquents) with nonrecidivists showing more positive change while in treatment than recidivists. However, for the Neurotic Anxious delinquents, the recidivist/nonrecidivist differences were significant, but in the opposite direction from that predicted: recidivists having made greater positive change than nonrecidivists. Analyses of covariance controlling separately for pretest scores and then posttest scores showed that some significant recidivist/nonrecidivist differences were lost when pretest scores were partialed out, while others were lost when posttest scores were partialed out. (See Table 2.) However, there were certain significant outcome differences which seemed related to

changes made during treatment even when controlling for either pretest or posttest scores. Such strong relationships between recidivism and change could be seen in the Immature Conformist group on the Enthusiasm scale and for the Neurotic Anxious group on Social Control and Anger Control scales. It must be remembered that this relationship was in the direction opposite from the one predicted, with recidivists having made greater positive change than nonrecidivists.

Discussion: The most important finding of this study seems to be the significant personality by recidivism interactions found on many of the change measures. Such interactions may explain some of the confusing results to be found in the field of juvenile delinquency treatment, where program evaluations often show contradictory effects of treatment. The data from this study indicate that there is no simple linear relationship between change undergone during treatment and recidivism.

The implication for researchers and program evaluators is that personality and change factors must be taken into account in studies of juvenile delinquency. In several studies (Adams, 1961; Grant & Grant, 1959; Jesness, 1971b), it was only when the interaction of the treatment and personality variables was considered that productive relationships with later success/failure rates were found. In other words, ignoring such interactions may often result in the report of "no treatment effect" when in actuality certain kinds of delinquents may have benefitted from the treatment.

The finding that different scales discriminated recidivists from nonrecidivists within each personality group suggests the need for using several change measures when evaluating a treatment program. While change along one dimension may be significant for a particular group, another kind of change may be important for other groups. The findings of this study suggest that

individuals may undergo various kinds of change when institutionalized, and the meaning of the same change may be totally different depending on the personality of the individual. There is a great need for further research in this area to determine what changes delinquents of various personality characteristics undergo while in treatment, and what kind of change is important for which group for successful parole outcome.

The next step, of course, would be to develop intervention programs to accomplish the kind of change that is related to reduction in recidivism. By further delineating what change might be significant for each personality group, short-term treatment goals could be established more reliably.

The present findings suggest that for certain types of delinquents (the Acting-out delinquent and the Immature Conformist in this study), change along certain behavioral dimensions relates to success on release. Therefore, improvement along these dimensions could serve as short-term treatment goals for programs dealing with these delinquents. With other delinquents, however, the same types of change while institutionalized may show little relationship to reduced recidivism and, therefore, would be totally inappropriate as short-term treatment goals. An example of this relationship can be seen in the present results for the Neurotic Anxious delinquents who showed change labelled as "negative" correlated with success on release.

Such findings also suggest the need to evaluate for each personality type what is "positive" and what is "negative" change. Although Jesness, in the development of his Behavior Checklist, labelled <u>increased</u> amounts of socially desirable behaviors as "positive," it seems that for certain delinquents <u>decrements</u> during treatment in certain socially valued behaviors may be "positive," in terms of long-range goals. For the Neurotic Anxious group, <u>decreased</u> anger control and social control while institutionalized correlate with reduced recidivism, and thus could be considered as "positive"

treatment signs for these delinquents.

In terms of clinical intervention, it seems therefore, that treatment goals need to match the personality of the delinquent. For Acting-out and Immature Conformist delinquents, improvement along certain socially desirable behavioral dimensions would be an appropriate short-term goal. For Neurotic Anxious delinquents, however, improvement during treatment in these areas will not necessarily correlate with long-term success (i.e., reduced recidivism). In fact, for these delinquents, some degree of acting-out behavior while institutionalized (i.e., decreased social and anger control) may contribute to long-term success.

The implication for the use of various psychotherapy modalities with delinquents is that various therapy modalities may be necessary to meet the different short-term goals. For the Acting-out and Immature Conformist delinquents, the most appropriate therapy modality might be some type of behavior modification and/or social skills training program designed to stimulate change along the relevant behavioral dimensions. For Neurotic Anxious delinquents, on the other hand, a more internally-oriented, psychodynamic therapy, which encouraged expression of anger and allowed for some acting-out behavior, might be more appropriate.

The findings would also tend to support the development and refinement of differential treatment programs. In such programs, delinquents are classified according to some treatment-relevant personality classifications and assigned to different treatment modalities accordingly. Although these programs' claims of success have been questioned by several writers (Lerman, 1968; Robison & Smith, 1972), the basic treatment design is starting to address the problem of juvenile delinquents' differential responsiveness to treatment. Even if these differential treatment programs have not been

refined sufficiently at present, it is important that personality differences not be ignored.

The failure of much correctional research to show empirical support for the efficacy of treatment may be due as much to the complexities of the problem of rehabilitation and the inadequacies of present methodologies to measure such a process, as to the ineffectiveness of the treatment programs.

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Table 1

F Ratios from Analyses of Variance on Change Scores for Recidivism, Personality Type and Recidivism by Personality Interactions

Behavior Checklist Scales	F Ratios		
	Recidivism (df=1,768)	Personality Type (df=8,768)	Recidivism X Personality Interactions (df=7,768)
1. Unobtrusiveness	2.04	1.17	2.04*
2. Friendliness	2.10	.71	2.09*
3. Responsibility	1.68	1.01	2.11*
4. Considerateness	.98	.99	1.18
5. Independence	.12	.71	.86
6. Rapport	.15	1.54	.88
7. Enthusiasm	.89	1.65	1.64
8. Sociability	1.27	.26	.81
9. Conformity	1.03	.61	1.85
10. Calmness	1.05	1.41	1.74
11. Effective Communication	.35	.37	1.76
12. Insight	1.67	.89	1.55
13. Social Control	.00	.54	2.90**
14. Anger Control	.72	.12	2.49*
Total Change (Sum of all Scales)	1.24	.62	2.30*

Note. N = 823 for each analysis of variance on all scales.

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

Table 2

Summary of Results from Analyses of Variance and Covariance on Change Scores for Personality Types Showing Significant Recidivist/Nonrecidivist Differences

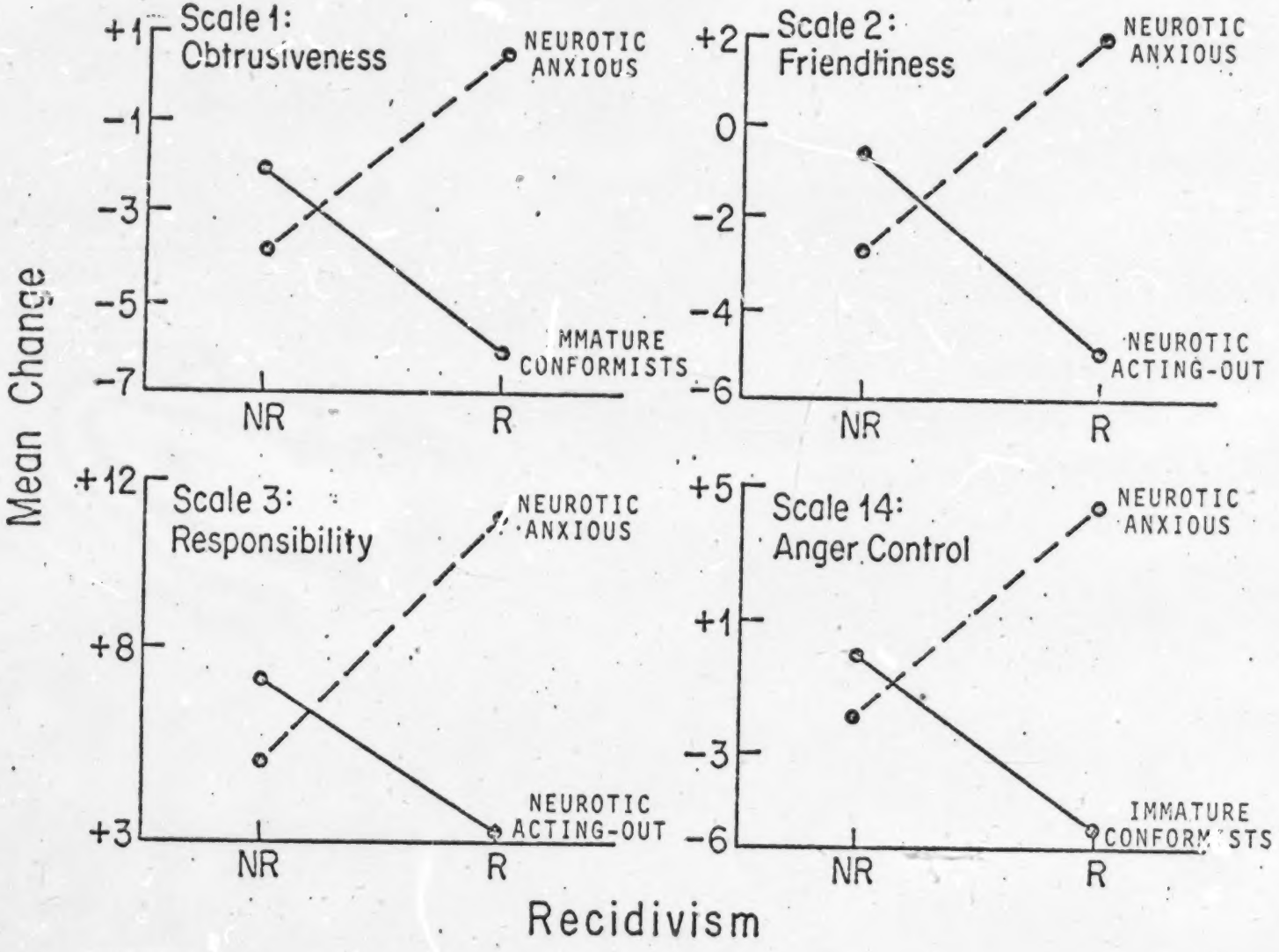
Measure	Personality Type								
	Immature Conformist			Neurotic Acting-out			Neurotic Anxious		
Behavior Checklist Scales	1[a]	2[b]	3[c]	1[a]	2[b]	3[c]	1[a]	2[b]	3[c]
1. Unobtrusiveness	*				*		*		**
2. Friendliness				*	**		*		**
3. Responsibility				*	*		**		***
4. Considerateness				*	*				
5. Independence							*		**
6. Rapport									
7. Enthusiasm	**	*	*						*
8. Sociability									*
9. Conformity							**		***
10. Calmness					*		*		**
11. Effective Communication							**		***
12. Insight		*			*				*
13. Social Control							***	*	***
14. Anger Control	*	*					**	*	***
Total Change					*		**		***

[a]Analyses of variance.

[b]Analyses of covariance with pretest scores as covariates.

[c]Analyses of covariance with posttest scores as covariates.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.


Scale 1:
Obtrusiveness
+1
-1
-3
-5
-7
NEUROTIC ANXIOUS
IMMATURE CONFORMISTS
NR
R
Scale 2:
Friendliness
+2
0
-2
-4
-6
NEUROTIC ANXIOUS
NEUROTIC ACTING-OUT
NR
R
Scale 3:
Responsibility
+12
+8
+3
NEUROTIC ANXIOUS
NEUROTIC ACTING-OUT
NR
R
Scale 14:
Anger Control
+5
+1
-3
-6
NEUROTIC ANXIOUS
IMMATURE CONFORMISTS
NR
R
Mean Change
Recidivism